

The Inflation Tamers

A long time ago in a sillier time where people thought they could control others and that the environment, the economy, all forms of expression were malleable to the whims of a select enlightened sort, there was a group entrusted with the most important task of all: prevent pain. These doctors of the economy, these masters of men, spent there days observing and monitoring a balloon. The balloon was no ordinary balloon for in it, was oxygen, which is essential to life, and carbon, a piece of each of us, in essence life itself.

The group was tasked with overseeing the balloon and were responsible for anything that should happen to the balloon. Balloons are very complex of course, what with their inner workings that we today couldn't possibly imagine explaining, but the fools took it upon themselves to "know" or at least pretend to know, explain and soothe. Given the balloon's complexities, the group focused on two key monitoring metrics. The balloon's color (it should remain green at all times) and its shape (it should remain round at all times). For the latter purpose, they called themselves the Inflation Tamers.

Over time of course, the balloon, which wasn't naturally green to begin with but was more of a brown, began to fade. One of the inflation tamers took it upon herself to try coloring the balloon. With a sharpie, she pressed against the balloon's exterior, but it didn't make much of a difference. "I need a blunter instrument," she exclaimed and procured a bucket of green paint. The paint splattered all over the balloon, much of it got on the grass outside where it was kept and the residual stained her hands. "At least, it's green now," she thought aloud. "It'll never be not green again."

Another inflation tamer saw the balloon the next day and called a meeting of the Inflation Tamers. "The sacred balloon has been vandalized," she expounded. "We need to bring it back to its former green self, but how?" One of the inflation tamers recalled a color theory lesson his kid told him about the other day. "My son told me about how blue and yellow make green. Blue and yellow are primary colors, so it should make a purer green than green itself." The inflation tamers procured blue and yellow paint. This time, they got the paint on the fence, as well as the grass, and on their legs as well as their hands. "A small price to pay for safety," one opined. "Job safety that is," said another. Pleased, the group returned to their tenement with no one watching the balloon. Nothing happens when you don't watch it.

Oh, but it did. When the group returned the next day, the balloon was smaller than they had recalled and it was certainly less round. One of the inflation tamers recalled training he received at the YMCA some years back and attempted CPR. The pressure on the balloon only caused it to be less rotund. One inflation tamer brought out a kid's educational toy with different shapes. "If we can get it to fit through the circular hole, it should be round again." So the inflation tamers tried, very forcefully, pushing the balloon through the tiny circular hole. The balloon

resembled more of a dehydrated cucumber at that point, when one of the inflation tamers yelled, "Stop!" He rushed over with something in his hands. It was large and mechanical. Could it solve all their problems?

The inflation tamer with the possible key to save the group from this dreaded responsibility-turned-chore admonished the group. "Everyone is counting on us. I don't want to have to tell my children and their children that we didn't do everything we could to save the balloon," he said in a sense of panic. Somehow his awareness of the situation enlivened the rest of the group. "We don't either!" they exclaimed. The inflation tamer put the tip of the device in the mouth of the balloon. The balloon had obviously lost a lot of its contents, but there was hope. The inflation tamer pushed down on the plunger. It let out a pfft. It wasn't working fast enough. He encouraged the group to join him in pushing down the plunger. There was one holdout inflation tamer, but the group admonished him to the point where he became the one pushing down the plunger the most.

Fortunately, the group pushed too far. The balloon burst and all its valuable contents came spewing out. I say fortunately because if it weren't for the actions of these foolhardy individuals and their group dynamics, their sense of superiority, we might still try to control nature and have a problem with randomness to this very day.